



# EmployeeUPDATE

*Our Mission: To serve the people of North Carolina by enabling individuals, families and communities to be healthy and secure, and to achieve social and economic well-being.*

A monthly publication for employees of the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services

## 45 years of work sees plenty of change

When Annette Renn started working for the state of North Carolina, Alaska and Hawaii had just received official statehood, Dwight D. Eisenhower was president, Luther H. Hodges was governor, and many baby boomers were still babies. It was September 1959.

Renn, 65, who retires Sept. 1, will have completed 45 years of continuous service, not just as a state employee but also while having held the same position – though the name has changed – in the Vital Records Section of the Division of Public Health.

Asked why she never changed jobs, Renn replies, “It’s interesting work, I like helping people.”

Renn’s dedication to her job is evident to those around her. “It is refreshing to see the level of dedication to work and professionalism that Annette exhibits by her continuing to do so well what she has done for all these years,” said Glenn Cutler, state registrar and director of Vital Records. “Many of us might become bored or complacent after a certain number of years, but I have never seen Annette demonstrate either trait.”

Renn has spent her time as a state employee making sure birth and death certificates carry the correct information. She began with Vital Records at age 20, working at an



Annette Renn

office in the Cooper Building, which at that time was only five years old. Most offices still sported their first coat of paint.

As she tells it, downtown Raleigh was a much different place than it is today. Gas stations – a Shell and a Gulf – sat on opposing corners of the block across from the Cooper Building, and the area where the Administration Building sits today was mostly houses and a pharmacy.

The landscape surrounding her office isn’t the only thing that’s changed. When she started her job, all staff worked on manual typewriters. Her’s was an Underwood. Over the years, technology changed and electric typewriters replaced manual typewriters, and then the most drastic change came with the introduction of computers. Renn says she’s not overly fond of computers, but the technology has helped speed up the processing and retrieval of birth and death certificates.

She’s seen a lot faces over the years – she says you could probably populate a small town with all the co-workers she’s known. When she began her career, many of her co-workers were older, some in their 70s and 80s. One co-worker’s husband had fought in the Spanish-American War.

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**Secretary's Letter**

# Combined Campaign offers opportunity to help our partners

Dear DHHS Employee,

Thank you for all of your good work. Every day you are doing great things to help make this a better state. All North Carolinians benefit from your efforts, which often go well beyond the call of duty.

Despite all you do, we can't do it alone. DHHS relies on a number of partners to get the job done. That's why the State Employees Combined Campaign is so very important. The charities represented in the SECC do a great deal of good work across this state.

You will soon receive campaign materials. As you flip through the "Partners in Giving" handbook, you'll see lots of familiar names. Many of these organizations work with DHHS on a daily basis to improve the lives of North Carolinians. Many of them are working in your community, making your neighborhood a better place.



This may be the first time that you have received information on the SECC. In past years, the campaign has been conducted regionally. We believe that we missed many DHHS employees through that approach, so this year we've decided to run a centralized campaign. That way the entire DHHS team – all 16,000-plus of us – can work together as a team to better all of our communities.

I hope you will look at these materials very closely and give serious thought to giving. The SECC is an easy way to do something good for everyone. It is also a great way to further the goals of DHHS.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Carmen Hooker Odom". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Carmen Hooker Odom



**Jalil Isa**  
*¡Salud y  
 Saludos!*

## Health messages finding their way into Hispanic television

The face of Spanish-language media continues changing throughout North Carolina and in the Triangle. But as WUVC, Univision 40 – the state’s only local Spanish-language television station – marked its one-year anniversary last month, several people were taking notice.

The Raleigh News and Observer ran a story about the impact the station has had on the community. And the station’s general manager is ecstatic to see the station’s ratings continuing to climb, based largely in part to a lack of Spanish-language television stations competition in the market. The station posted as large a viewership in primetime between men aged 18-34 as did ratings powerhouse WRAL in that same category. In men ages 18-24, WUVC fared even better.

This may also be a reflection of the concentration of young Latino men working in the area. They make up a substantial portion of the Spanish-language station’s soccer-focused audience. But that’s not stopping non-Latinos from watching. Some may also watch to practice their Spanish; others may be amused by the dramatic telenovelas or possibly the attractive women on some of the shows.

It is this dramatic difference in television culture that causes me to think twice about the way I look at television. Truth be told, I watch more English-language television than anything else (what little television I have time for, these days!). Yet, I would ordinarily not find any sign of anything of the unusual in the oft-described “over-the-top” programs that are a staple of Spanish-language television. I grew up watching a mixture of both Spanish and English programming. English afforded me more entertainment options –but it was nearly impossible to avoid getting sucked into some of the more popular telenovelas growing up, and Spanish television has plenty more news on the happenings of Latin America. These are stories that rarely make it onto the American network newscasts, even though the reports are frequently about countries that have the closest proximity to the U.S. ...and I’m not just referring to Mexico.

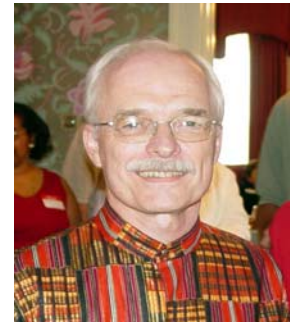
It is interesting for me to compare the television programming that you might see on a Spanish channel, to its closest counterpart on the English-language channels. Latinos in general tend to be far more expressive individuals; some would say, “dramatic.” In light of this, I guess it serves well to have telenovelas that impart this kind of expression. But even I have become more toned down in my expressiveness, to the point that those telenovelas *sometimes* even raise *my* eyebrows.

One positive development in these Spanish soap operas has been the recent addition of health and safety messages into their scripts. As more producers realize the positive impact their closely-watched soaps have on their audience, they’re beginning to include good practices into their dramas. There’s the case of the telenovela whose principal character had a breast cancer scare. As a result of the soap stressing the importance of breast exams, health authorities saw a dramatic spike in the number of Latinas seeking these exams. ■

*Jalil*

## *Retiree finds new challenge*

# Dale Herman heads up church relief effort in Uganda



Dale Herman

Dale Herman spent his career dealing with the challenges and rewards of health care, but his experiences have taken him far beyond hospitals, health insurance and paperwork. Dividing his time between North Carolina and Africa, he has worked to make health care informative and available. When he retired as director of North Carolina's Central Cancer Registry in July, following 25 years of state service, he had no plans to kick back and go fishing. Instead, he returned to Africa to devote his time to waiting challenges.

Herman and his wife Gann traveled to Uganda on Lake Victoria in eastern Africa to oversee the Mennonite Central Committee relief program for the next six years. Their goal is to help local Ugandan religious leaders, who are Catholic, Anglican, Orthodox and Muslim, work for peace and reconciliation in a country torn apart by civil war violence and the effects of HIV/AIDS.

The missionaries face immense challenges; Uganda is a country beset with problems. An ongoing 17-year civil war has forced more than 800,000 people to flee their homes and become refugees within their own country. There is often a lack of nutritious food and clean water. One in 20 adults is infected with HIV/AIDS and more than 880,000 children have lost a parent or been orphaned by the disease. Herman will work to provide relief for the refugees, facilitate amnesty for former rebels and care for children who have been victims of violence or HIV/AIDS.

Despite the difficulties and dangers, Herman sees hope in what he can do for the Ugandan people. "The rewards will be smiles on the faces of children who feel safe, hope in the eyes of children who can envision a future even without parents who died from AIDS, and seeing families return to their homes after years living as refugees," he said.

The MCC asked Herman to go to Uganda because of his previous experience working in Africa. In 1983, under the sponsorship of the MCC, Dale moved with his family to Swaziland where he was a health statistician for the Ministry of Health. In 1986, he moved to Lesotho to work as an epidemiology advisor.

But, Herman started his health care career in North Carolina in 1972 when he worked for the University of North Carolina School of Public Health as an occupational research associate. He took time away from state government while he was in Africa; but when he returned in 1990, Herman began working for the Central Cancer Registry and was appointed its director in April 2000.

"The task of providing direction for the Registry was challenging, but the greatest personal challenge came in trying to respond to people who were suffering from the pain of their own diagnosis with cancer or with the diagnosis in a family member," Herman said. "It is easy to just deal with statistics, but they represent untold human pain and I tried to always keep that in mind."

He decided to retire when the MCC offered him another opportunity to go to Africa. "Having lived in Africa, it was in our blood, and so, when we were approached by the MCC about the possibility of going to Uganda, it did not take us very long to say 'yes'," he said. The couple will be living in Kampala, the capitol, but they plan on traveling around the country.

The Mennonite Central Committee is one relief group that works in countries around the world to bring relief, service and peace to impoverished people. It is an organization of the North American Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches. For more information, visit the website <http://www.mcc.org>.

*Contributed by Ashley Duncan*



# Dix graduates sixth class of certified therapy teams

Teams of dogs and their two-legged owners are proving that there is a lot more to a dog's life than barking and begging. The sixth class of Helping Paws Pet Assisted Therapy Training Program graduated earlier this summer at Dorothea Dix Hospital.

The pet therapy teams, which include a dog and its human companion, visit Dix patients, providing individual attention to people who often have few visitors.

During the 16-week training program, the dogs learn all the skills necessary for successful pet therapy dogs – obedience, agility for maneuvering around obstacles they may encounter while visiting a facility (such as wheelchairs, IV stands, medical equipment) and a few tricks to entertain patients.

Twenty-five teams have graduated from Helping Paws since it was started two years ago. Twenty teams are regular Dix visitors. Each area of the hospital receives a monthly visit from a group of teams, which can include three to five pet/human duos.

The group provides individual attention to the patients at Dix as well as residents at assisted living facilities, nursing homes, retirement villages and Ronald McDonald Houses. Many of the patients have few, if any, visitors and simply look forward to visits from their four and two-



Left to right: Recent graduates Icy, Joy and Taylor

legged friends of Helping Paws. Their visits also encourage social interaction, which often may be a challenge for individuals with mental illness since some tend to isolate themselves from others. The dogs are also great entertainers with the tricks they perform and their wonderful seasonal costumes that they periodically wear throughout the year.

Helping Paws has recently received several awards for its work, including the Wake County Board of Commissioners' Volunteer Award and the Governor's Award for Outstanding Volunteer Service. ■

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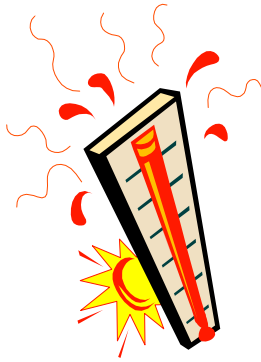
## 45 years, continued from page1

What's the most memorable change to a birth certificate she's been asked to make? "One gentleman changed his name to 'Lucky 7,'" she says. When she started with Vital Records, it cost \$1 to process a birth certificate; today the cost is \$15.

Renn says she doesn't have big plans for her retirement. She likes to garden and do yard work. One thing she will do is give her 1995 Chevrolet Caprice a rest – Renn has

lived north of Louisburg for 43 of her 45 years of service. She says she's been through several Chevrolets; her current one has 211,000 miles, but she doesn't plan to get rid of it anytime soon.

One thing she is sure of, after her last day at work, her parking space near the employee entrance to the Cooper Building probably will not remain empty for long. ■



## Keys to hot weather safety: Plenty of water, limited exposure

Hot, humid weather can be more than just uncomfortable - it can pose a threat to your health or even your life. In 2003, six North Carolinians died from the effects of hot weather, and heat-related illness sent many more to emergency rooms or doctors' offices.

"We want people to stay safe and healthy during hot weather," said Dr. Steve Cline, chief of the Epidemiology Section of the North Carolina Division of Public Health. "They need to know the signs of heat stress and the simple things they can do - like drinking plenty of water - that can prevent heat-related illness and death."

Children, the elderly, people with chronic illnesses and people on certain medications like tranquilizers or diuretics are especially at risk from high summer temperatures. So are older people who live in homes or apartments without air conditioning or good air flow and people who don't drink enough water. Hot weather also adds to ozone levels, making those with respiratory illness more vulnerable.

Being exposed to high temperatures for too long can cause muscle cramps, swelling in feet or ankles, or dizziness, progressing to heat exhaustion or heat stroke. Heat exhaustion, if not treated, can progress to heat stroke. Heat stroke is an emergency and requires immediate medical help - it can be fatal.

Heat exhaustion may make you feel dizzy, weak, uncoordinated, nauseated, and perhaps thirsty, and you may sweat a lot. Your skin may feel cold and clammy, although your body temperature may be normal. What to do: rest in a cool place, out of the sun; drink plenty of water or fluids (but not alcohol or caffeine); wash off with cool water if possible; and get medical care. If not treated, heat exhaustion can turn into life-threatening heat stroke.

Signs of heat stroke include fainting; a body temperature of over 104°; a change in behavior such as confusion, grouchiness, staggering or acting strangely; dry flushed

skin and a strong rapid pulse or a slow weak pulse; not sweating in spite of the heat; acting delirious; slipping into a coma.

What to do: call 911; get the person out of the sun and heat and have them lie down; give them plenty of water or juice to drink if they are conscious; cool their body down with a cool shower or bath or by sponging with cool water. Prompt medical attention is critical - people can die of heat stroke.

To avoid heat-related illness on hot days:

- Drink plenty of water or fruit and vegetable juices. Avoid caffeine or alcohol.
- Limit your time outdoors, especially in the afternoon when the day is hottest.
- Be careful about exercising or doing a lot of activities when it is hot. Stay out of the sun, take frequent breaks, drink water or juice often, and watch for signs of heat exhaustion or heat stroke.
- Dress for the weather. Loose-fitting, light-colored cotton clothes are cooler than dark colors or some synthetics.
- If you live in a home without fans or air conditioning, open windows to allow air flow, and keep shades, blinds or curtains drawn in the hottest part of the day or when they are in direct sunlight. Try to spend at least part of the day in an air conditioned place like a shopping mall, a store, the library, a friend's house or the movies. Cool showers can help, too. Using hand-held fans when the air temperature is above 95° can add to heat stress.
- Never leave a child or a disabled or elderly person or a pet in an unattended car, even with the windows down. A closed vehicle can heat up to dangerous levels in as little as 10 minutes. Last year, 154 children died in hot cars in the United States.

For more information about avoiding heat-related illness, see the National Institutes of Health heat illness web page at [health.nih.gov/result.asp/317](http://health.nih.gov/result.asp/317).



# Bank draft, credit cards accelerate child support payments

Child Support Enforcement is making life easier for parents who pay child support. Parents may now submit their child support payments using a credit card or automatic bank drafts. Both methods shorten the time between submission of a payment and disbursement of funds. They also reduce the possibility of lost or misapplied payments.

“People like to use their credit card to catch up on arrears,” said Daisie Blue, manager of Child Support Enforcement’s System User Support Section. “And making a bank draft by using the child support website is so easy.” The website is: [www.ncchildsupport.com](http://www.ncchildsupport.com).

The new methods of payment have been popular, with very little public outreach. After five months, \$1.3 million in child support has been paid with credit cards. Bank draft has been in place longer, and collects an average of \$698,000 a month.

**North Carolina Child Support Enforcement**

Welcome to North Carolina eChild Support

**Sign on** to get details about your North Carolina Child Support Enforcement Case. If you receive child support, you can verify the status of your child support case, find out if a payment is on its way to you, or learn the amount of arrears owed to you. If you pay child support in North Carolina, you can ensure a payment was received, verify a payment amount, find out if you are in arrears, or **pay child support**.

Only Payment information is available for child support cases handled by the clerk of court. Contact your **County Clerk of Court Office** for information not available on this web site.

Want to pay your child support? **Register to make a payment online.**

Review **North Carolina's Child Support Guidelines**, or find the **Child Support Enforcement(CSE) office** or **Clerk of Court's Office** that is closest to you.

Have an issue with your case or a comment on the web site? **Contact Us**.

**Other important sites**

**The Official WebSite of North Carolina** This official web site of North Carolina provides North Carolina related public, business and financial information, information on North Carolina's educational facilities and links to all North Carolina agencies known to have information available via the internet. You may also go directly from here to **DSS Home**, **CSE** and **DHHS**.

These options are available to noncustodial parents who are not under an income withholding order or who want to make a payment in addition to payments made through income withholding.



# Tasty Ways to Eat Well and Move More on Road Trips



As August heats up, summer winds down and the start of a new school year looms, there might be a few more trips to the beach or the mountains before the warm weather disappears. Try these ideas on your next road trip for healthier eating and more exercise.

## EAT WELL

### 1. Bring your own food

The best way to have control over food is always to bring your own. Whether it's a simple bag of snacks or a fully stocked cooler, bringing your own food saves money and time and improves your nutrition.

Include fresh fruits, like apples, bananas and pears, and bite-size vegetables like baby carrots, celery sticks and grape tomatoes. Dried fruits, like cranberries, plums and mangoes, are another deliciously sweet option.

Many car snacks (candy, chips and soda) are pure fat and sugar. Adding protein to your snack options will help you feel more satisfied. Slices of meat and cheese, in sandwiches or solo, are great ways to get protein.



### 2. Stock up at the supermarket

For the best value and variety, make pit stops at a local grocery instead of a fast food restaurant or convenience store. Produce stands and farmer's markets can also be nutrition bonanzas!

### 3. Choose wisely at the gas station

Believe it or not you can even find some decent food and beverage choices at a truck stop or convenience store.

Skip the candy bars and snacks at the counter (designed for impulse buying). Check out water, juice or milk in the coolers or nuts and seeds in the snack aisle.

Remember to downsize your portion size. Super-sized bags may tempt you to eat more when the drive gets boring. Buy a small bag or take out a reasonable amount and put the rest out of sight (and out of mind).

## MOVE MORE

### 4. Explore a roadside attraction or walk around a rest stop

America's highways are lined with interesting and bizarre places to explore from historical markers to giant sculptures of bears and lumberjacks to rest stops with scenery or interesting people. On your next trip, plan to take a couple of 30-minute breaks to discover something new along your route. Physical activity helps drivers feel more alert and makes kids less restless.

### 5. Play in a park

With city parks, county parks, state parks, national parks, slides, swings, climbing structures, swimming pools, sandy beaches, nature trails, guided walks and more, there are unlimited opportunities for active fun across the country. Many are free and most of the others have reasonable admission fees. All you have to do is get out of the car and walk, run, stretch, swing, roll, climb or paddle your way to fitness.

### 6. Carry fitness "equipment" in your car

Bikes, canoes and rafts are great ways to fit your fitness in as you travel. Sports equipment doesn't need to be big, heavy or expensive in order to be fun and healthy. A bat and baseball, a Frisbee or a boomerang are all small, portable and cheap ways to have fun anywhere. ■





# Politics must stay removed from workplace

With the recent primary elections, we are now into the season that comes every four years for political decisions at the national, state and local level.

Employees are reminded that while all are encouraged to participate in the electoral process, it is very important to keep politics removed from the work place.

Employees should not use work time or state equipment, including computers, to participate in any partisan campaigns.

Sending or receiving e-mails to/from campaign websites on state computers is considered inappropriate use of

state equipment. Employees may be disciplined for such violations. If you have inadvertently been added to list serves for any campaigns, you should e-mail a request to be removed and keep a hard copy of that request.

Also, the display of any political materials inside the workplace is not appropriate for state offices.

If you have questions about participation in partisan campaigns, please check with your division director or Human Resources manager.

## Adoption Profile

### Introducing Pauline

Pauline likes people and gets along well with everyone. She is respectful, compassionate and a gentle soul who likes to please those she cares about. Pauline enjoys trips to Wal-Mart, going to the movies, swimming and taking long walks. She is fascinated by cooking shows and would love to learn to how cook. Pauline is a bright young woman who makes A's and B's in most of her subjects. She attends resource classes for math and reading and an Individualized Education Plan helps her stay on track with her academic goals. Speech therapy is helping Pauline learn to organize her thoughts before she speaks and keep her words clear and understandable.



Pauline  
b. Dec. 1, 1990

### A Family for Pauline...

This thoughtful, sensitive girl needs a loving, nurturing family that will spend time with her and demonstrate their affection for her. Pauline would benefit from parents who can praise and encourage her progress and support her interests, while subtly and systematically helping her build her self-esteem. An adoptive family for Pauline should work closely with her teachers and counselors to develop an appropriate plan for her continued success in school. (NC #043-2058) For more information on this child or adoption and foster care in general, call NC Kids Adoption and Foster Care Network toll free at 1-877-NCKIDS-1 (1-877-625-4371).